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NON-LICENSED BAT METHOD STATEMENT

At

Bridgeway Centre
Bridge Road
Wrexham Industrial Estate
Wrexham
LL13 9QS

NGR: SJ 37879 49483

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author and qualifications

This report is written and compiled by Bethan Beeston, Field Ecologist for United Environmental Services (UES) Ltd.

This report has been verified by Tom Kenwright BSc MSc ACIEEM, UES Senior Ecologist. Tom is licensed by Natural Resources Wales to disturb, take and handle all species, other than horseshoe species, under licence number S094176/1.

1.2 Proposed development and previous survey information

The development proposals entail the demolition of the remaining buildings on site, and the construction of new commercial units in their place.

A suite of bat surveys have been undertaken of the buildings on site, which include:

- 24/02/2020 - Bat scoping survey undertaken by UES (report reference: UES03012/02).
- 22/09/2020 - Bat presence / absence survey of Buildings 1 and 2 were undertaken in September 2020 by UES (Report reference: UES03012/03).
- 17/02/2023 – Updated bat scoping survey on Building 1 and 2.
- 13/05/2024 & 17/06/2024 - Bat presence / absence surveys of Buildings 1 and 2 were undertaken in May and June 2024 (report reference UES03012/13).

The results of the bat scoping and presence / absence surveys are detailed below:

<u>September 2020 - Buildings 1 and 2</u>

- Roost 1 – A single common pipistrelle emerged from the western aspect of building, at the corner of L-shape on Building 1.
- Roost 2 – BLE emerged from the north-western aspect between roofing felt and fascia board of Building 2.

<u>February 2023 – Buildings 1 and 2</u>

- During the updated scoping survey, a single bat dropping was recorded externally, beneath Roost 2 on Building 2.

<u>May and June 2024 – Buildings 1 and 2</u>

- No evidence of bats or roosting bats were recorded within either building.

1.3 Report objectives and structure

This document sets out all the necessary procedures, timings and mitigation measures to avoid impacts on bats during works on site and avoid any potential breaches of protected species legislation. This report should be read in conjunction with Appendices 1 – 3.

2 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 Impacts without mitigation

The bat surveys undertaken in 2020 found bat roosts to be present within two of the buildings on site (Appendix 1):

- **Roost 1**: Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* day roost used by a single bat, within Building 1.

- **Roost 2:** brown long-eared (BLE) bat *Plecotus auritus* day roost used by a single bat within Building 2.

No bats were observed roosting in the building during the updated bat presence / absence survey undertaken by UES in May 2024, despite the surveys being undertaken during the peak survey season.

As there is no recent evidence of bats roosting in the buildings, it is considered that bats are no longer and are not currently using the buildings for roosting purposes. As such, it is considered that a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from Natural Resources Wales is not needed for the works to proceed. However, there remains a residual risk that bats may use the buildings to roost in the future. As such, the works should proceed under a non-licenced method statement to protect bats in the event that they are present at the time of the works.

3 MITIGATION MEASURES

The following measures are designed with the primary objective of safeguarding bats in the event that they are present during the works. They will ensure that the construction personnel have a high level of understanding about bats and the legislation which protects them and provide them with the necessary guidance and mechanisms should any bats be discovered during the development process.

3.1 Timings

No timing restrictions are required as the works are being conducted under a non-licensed method statement as a precautionary measure only and no evidence of hibernation or maternity roosts have ever been recorded on site.

3.2 Toolbox talk

Prior to commencement of any destructive works, the project ecologist will deliver a toolbox talk to the contractors responsible for the destructive works. The toolbox talk will include:

- The location of potential roosting features within the building
- The location of historic bat roosts within the building
- Bat ecology
- Bats and the law
- What to do if bats or field signs of bats are found during the works

3.3 Pre-commencement building inspection

All external potential roosting features within the buildings will be subject to a detailed inspection by a licenced bat ecologist immediately prior to the start of destructive works. The ecologist will use an endoscope where necessary to examine inside the potential roosting features, in order to further confirm the presence or absence of bats and direct works accordingly.

In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of a bat is discovered during the works, the works will stop immediately, and the current method statement will be reviewed by the project ecologist, including the requirement for an EPS licence. If needed, works will not continue until an EPS licence has been granted by Natural Resources Wales.

3.4 Soft demolition techniques and bat box installation

The potential roosting features, historic roosting locations and other sensitive areas of the building are to be removed by hand, under the direct supervision of a licensed bat ecologist.

In the unlikely event that a bat is discovered during the works, works will stop immediately, the bat will be left in-situ and the roost will be reinstated. If the roost can't be reinstated, or if the bat is injured or at risk of harm if left in-situ, only then will the bat be collected by hand by the onsite ecologist and transported to a pre-installed bat box on site. If the bat is harmed or emaciated, it will be taken to the nearest animal hospital or bat carer if deemed necessary by the onsite ecologist.

Prior to the destructive works, an Schwegler 2F (general purpose) bat box will be affixed to a nearby tree to ensure that it is available during the entire development process. Provided it is agreed with the project ecologist, alternative bat box models can be used if the specified model is not available at the time of purchase. The bat box will be sited under the advice of the licensed ecologist and away from any potential disturbance (including external lighting).

Following the completion of the destructive works and the construction phase of the development, the bat box will be retained in-situ to act as compensation for the loss of potential roosting features within the buildings. Once bats have inhabited a bat box they may only be disturbed by a licensed bat ecologist.

3.5 External lighting

When planning external lighting, including temporary lighting used during the construction phase of the development, consideration is to be given to the commuting and dispersal routes used by bats. External lighting is to be directed away from the installed bat box and tree lines. See Appendix 2 – External lighting guidance for further information.

3.6 Ongoing advice

UES will remain on call throughout the development in case any further advice is needed or for the unlikely event that bats are encountered.

In the unlikely event that a bat is discovered during the works, the works will stop immediately, and a bat licensed ecologist will be contacted for advice. The current non-licenced method statement will be reviewed, including the requirement for an EPS licence. If needed, works will not continue until an EPS licence has been granted by Natural Resources Wales.

UES can be contacted directly on 01565 757788.

4 POST-DEVELOPMENT

There will be no fragmentation, isolation or long-term impacts on bats locally as a result of the proposed development. Under the current scheme, no linear features will be lost or altered and habitat linkages will remain unchanged.

No long-term monitoring or management is considered necessary.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan


B1
B2
Bridgeway Centre, Wrexham Industrial Estate
Site Plan
Buildings
Roost 1 (common pipistrelle in 2020)
Roost 2 (BLE in 2020)
Map data © 2024 Google, Imagery © 2024 Google

Appendix 2 – External lighting guidance

Lighting scheme in relation to bats

The two most important features of street and security lighting with respect to bats are:

1. The UV component. Low or zero UV installations are preferred to reduce attraction of insects to lighting and therefore to reduce the attraction of foraging bats to these areas.

2. Restriction of the area illuminated. Lighting must be shielded to maintain dark areas, particularly above lighting installations, and in many cases, land adjacent to the areas illuminated. The aim is to maintain dark commuting corridors for foraging and commuting bats. Bats avoid well lit areas, and these create barriers for flying bats between roosting and feeding areas.

UV characteristics:

Low

- Low pressure Sodium Lamps (SOX) emit a minimal UV component.
- High pressure Sodium Lamps (SON) emit a small UV component.
- White SON, though low in UV, emit more than regular SON.

High

- Metal Halide lamps emit more UV than SON lamps, but less than Mercury lamps
- Mercury lamps (MBF) emit a high UV component.
- Tungsten Halogen, if unfiltered, emit a high UV component
- Compact Fluorescent (CFL), if unfiltered, emit a high UV component.
- Variable
- Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) have a range of UV outputs. Variants are available with low or minimal UV output.
- Glass glazing and UV filtering lenses are recommended to reduce UV output.

Street lighting

- Low-pressure sodium or high-pressure sodium must be used instead of mercury or metal halide lamps. LEDs must be specified as low UV. Tungsten halogen and CFL sources must have appropriate UV filtering to reduce UV to low levels.
- Lighting must be directed to where it is needed and light spillage avoided. Hoods must be used on each lamp to direct light and contain spillage. Light leakage into hedgerows and trees must be avoided.
- If possible, the times during which the lighting is on overnight must be limited to provide some dark periods. If the light is fitted with a timer this must be adjusted to reduce the amount of 'lit time' and provide dark periods.

Security and domestic external lighting

The above recommendations concerning UV output and direction apply. In addition:

- Lighting should illuminate only ground floor areas. Light should not leak upwards to illuminate first floor and higher levels.
- Lamps of greater than 2000 lumens (150 W) must not be used.
- Movement or similar sensors must be used. They must be carefully installed and aimed, to reduce the amount of time a light is on each night.
- Light must illuminate only the immediate area required, by using as sharp a downward angle as possible. Light must not be directed at or close to bat roost access points or flight paths from the roost. A shield or hood can be used to control or restrict the area to be lit.
- Wide angle illumination must be avoided as this will be more disturbing to foraging and commuting bats as well as people and other wildlife.
- Lighting must not illuminate any bat bricks and boxes placed on buildings, trees or other nearby locations.

Taken from the Bat Conservation Trust

Appendix 3 – Statutory and planning context

Ecological assessments

Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

Bats

In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the "Habitats Regulations"). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] … uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by National Resources Wales (NRW).

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.

Planning Policy

National planning guidance is issued in the form of Planning Policy Wales (PPW - 2018). The most relevant sections are included in Chapter 6: Distinctive and Natural Places. This chapter details the policies on issues such as the protection of trees, woodlands, species, and designated sites. The document is free and available to view online.